CRAIG KENNEDY DETECTIVE STORIES

BY..... ARTHUR B. REEVE...

THE GUN-RUNNER.

"WITH the treaty ratified, if the deal goes through we'll all be rich."

Something about the remark which rose over the babel of voices arrested Kennedy's attention. For one thing, it was a woman's voice, and it was not the sort of remark to be expected from a woman, at least not in such a place.

Craig had been working pretty hard and began to show the strain. We had taken an evening off, and now had dropped in after the theater at the Burridge, one of the most frequented midnight resorts on Broadway.

At the table next to us—and the tables at the Burridge were so close that one almost rubbed elbows with those at the next—sat a party of four, two ladies in evening gowns and two men in immaculate black and white.

"I hope you are right, Leontine," returned one of the men, with an English accent. "The natural place for the islands is under the American flag, anyway."

"Yes," put in the other; "the people have voted for it before. They want it."

It was at the time that the American and Danish governments were negotiating about the transfer of the Danish West Indies, and quite evidently they were discussing the islands. The last speaker seemed to be a Dane, but the woman with him, evidently his wife, was not. It was a curious group, worth more than a passing glance. For a moment Craig watched them closely.

"That woman in blue," he whispered, "is a typical promoter."

There were plenty of other types in the brilliantly lighted dining room, and we did not dwell long on the study of our neighbors. A few moments later Kennedy left me and was visiting another table. It was a habit of his, for he had hundreds of friends and acquaintances, and the Burridge was the place to which every one came.

This time I saw that he had stopped before some one whom I recognized. It was Capt. Marlowe of the American shipping trust, to whom Kennedy had been of great assistance at the time of the launching of his great ship, the Usona, and he was accompanied by a man whose face was unfamiliar to me.

As I recognized who it was to whom Kennedy was speaking, I also rose and made my way over to the table. As I approached, the captain turned from Kennedy and greeted me cordially.

"Mr. Whitson," he introduced the man with him. "Mr. Whitson is sailing tomorrow for St. Thomas on the Arroyo. We're preparing to extend our steamship lines to the islands as soon as the formalities of the purchase are completed."

Marlowe turned again to Kennedy and went on with the remark he had evidently been making.

"Of course," I heard him say, "you know we have Mexico practically blockaded as far as arms and ammunition go. Yet, Kennedy, through a secret channel I know that thousands of stands of arms and millions of rounds of ammunition are filtering in there. It's shameful. I can't imagine anything more traitorous. Whoever is at the bottom of it ought to swing. It isn't over the border that they are going. We know that. The troops are there. How is it, then?"

A few moments later we shook hands and returned to our own table. We paid our check and were about to leave.

"Hello!" greeted a familiar voice beside us. "I've been looking all over town for you. They told me you had gone to the theater and I thought I might possibly find you here."

We turned. It was our old friend Burke of the secret service, accompanied by a stranger.

"I'd like you to meet Mr. Sydney; the new special consular agent whom the government is sending to the Danish West Indies to investigate and report on trade conditions." He introduced. "We're off for St. Thomas on the Arroyo, which sails tomorrow noon."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Kennedy. "Is everybody daffy over those little islands? What takes you down there, Burke?" Burke looked about hastily, then drew us aside into a recess in the lobby.

"I don't suppose you know," he explained, lowering his voice, "but since these negotiations began the consular service has been keenly interested in the possibilities on the islands. The government sent one special agent there, named Dwight. Well, he died a few days ago. It was very suspicious, so much so that the authorities in the islands investigated. Yet the doctors have found no evidence of anything wrong, no poison. Still, it is very mysterious, and, you know," he hinted, "there are those who don't want us down there."

The secret service man paused as though he had put the case as briefly and pointedly as he could, then went on: "I've been assigned to accompany the new consul down there and investigate. I've no particular orders and the chief will honor any reasonable expense account—but——" He hesitated and stopped, looking keenly at Kennedy's face. I saw what he was driving at.

"Well—to come to the point—what I wanted to see you about, Kennedy, is to find out whether you would go with me, I think," he added, persuasively, "it would be quite worth your while. Besides, you look tired. You're working too hard. The change will do you good. And your conscience needn't trouble you. You'll be working, all right."

Kennedy smiled as he read the other's enthusiasm. "I'd like to think the proposal over," he conceded, much to my surprise. "I'll let you know in the morning."

"Mind," wheedled Burke. "I won't take no for an answer. We need you."

I went to bed, tired, but through the night I knew Craig was engaged on some work about which he seemed to be somewhat secretive. When I saw him again in the laboratory, in the morning, he had before him a large packing case of stout wood, bound with steel bands.

"What's that?" I asked, mystified. He opened the lid, a sort of door, which was a strong lock, and I looked inside.

"My traveling laboratory," he remarked with pride.

"Then you are going with Burke to St. Thomas?" I queried.

Kennedy nodded. "I've been thinking of what I would do if an important case ever called me away. Burke's proposal hurried me, that's all. And you are going, also," he added. "You have until noon to break the news to the Star."

Thus it came about that Craig and I found ourselves in the forenoon in a taxicab, on the front of which was loaded the precious box, as well as our other hastily packed luggage, and we were on our way to Brooklyn, to the dock from which the Arroyo sailed.

Already the clearance papers had been obtained, and there was the usual last-moment confusion among the passengers as the hour for sailing approached. It seemed as if we had scarcely boarded the ship when Kennedy was as gay as a schoolboy on an unexpected holiday. I realized at once what was the cause. The change of scene, the mere fact of cutting loose, were having their effect.

As we steamed slowly down the bay I ran my eye over the other passengers at the rail, straining their eyes to catch the last glimpse of the towers of New York. There were Burke and Sydney, but they were not together, and, to all appearances, did not know each other. Sydney, of course, could not conceal his identity, nor did he wish to, no matter how beset with unseen perils might be his mission. But Burke was down on the passenger list as, and had assumed the role of, a traveling salesman for a mythical novelty house in Chicago. That evidently was part of the plan they had agreed on between themselves. Kennedy took the cue.

As I studied the various groups, I paused suddenly, surprised. There was the party which had sat at the table next to us at the Burridge the night before.

Just then Craig jogged my elbow. He had caught sight of Whitson edging his way in our direction. I saw what it was that Craig meant. He wanted introductions to come about naturally, as they do on shipboard if one only waits.

On deck and in the lounging and smoking rooms it did not take long for him to contrive ways of meeting and getting acquainted with those he wished to know, without exciting suspicion. Thus, by the time we sat down to dinner in the saloon we were all getting fairly chummy.

We had me Burke quite as naturally as if we were total strangers. It was easy to make it appear that Whitson and Sydney were shipboard acquaintances. Nor was it difficult to secure an introduction to the other party of four. The girl whom we had heard addressed as Leontine seemed to be the leader of the group. Leontine Cowell was a striking personality. I was never quite sure whether she remembered seeing us at the Burridge, whether she penetrated the parts we were playing. She was none the less feminine because she had aspirations in a commercial way.

Her companion, Barrett Burleigh, was

"HE POURED OUT THE CONTENTS OF ONE OF THE COCKTAIL GLASSES."

a polished, derefential Englishman, one of those who seem to be citizens of the world rather than subjects of any particular country.

Jorgen Erickson was, as I had surmised, a Dane. He proved to be one of the largest planters in the island, already wealthy and destined to be wealthier if real estate advanced. The other woman, Nanette, was his wife. She was also a peculiarly interesting type, a Frenchwoman from Guadeloupe. Younger and more vivacious than her husband, her snappy black eyes betokened an attractive personality.

Leontine Cowell, it seemed, had been in the islands not long before, had secured options on some score of plantations at a low figure, and made no secret of her business. When the American flag at last flew over the islands she stood to win out of the increase of land values a considerable fortune.

Erickson also, in addition to his own holdings, had been an agent for some other planters and thus had met Leontine, who had been the means of interesting some American capital.

As for Burleigh, it seemed that he had made the acquaintance of Leontine in Wall street. He had been in the Caribbean, and the impending changes in the Danish West Indies had attracted his notice. Whether he had some money to invest in the speculation or hoped to profit by commissions derived from sales did not appear. But at any rate some common bond had thrown the quarter together.

It must have been the second day out that I observed Leontine and Sydney together on the promenade deck. They seemed to be quite interested in each other, though I felt sure that Leontine was making a play for him. At any rate, Burleigh was jealous. What ever might be the scheme, it was apparent that the young Englishman was head over heels in love with her.

What did it mean? Was she playing with Sydney, seeking to secure his influence to further her schemes? Or did it mask some deeper, more sinister motive?

Busy with my speculations, I was astonished soon after to realize that the triangle had become a hexagon, so to speak. Whitson and Nanette Erickson seemed to be much in each other's company. But unlike Burleigh, Erickson seemed to be either oblivious or complacent.

Whatever it might all portend, I found that it did not worry Kennedy, although he observed closely. Burke, however, was considerably excited and even went so far as to speak to Sydney, over whom he felt a sort of guardianship. Sydney turned the matter off lightly. As for me, I determined to watch both of these women closely.

Kennedy spent much time not only in watching the passengers, but in going about the ship, talking to the captain and crew and every one who knew anything about the islands. In fact, he collected enough information in a few days to have satisfied any ordinary tourist for weeks.

Even the cargo did not escape his attention, and I found that he was especially interested in the rather heavy shipments of agricultural implements that were consigned to various planters in the islands.

It was the evening after one of Kennedy's busy days scouting about that he quietly summoned both Burke and Sydney to our cabin.

"There's something queer going on," announced Craig, when he was sure that we were all together without being observed. "Frankly, I must confess that I don't understand it—yet."

"You needn't worry about me," interrupted Sydney, hastily. "I can take care of myself."

Kennedy smiled quietly. We knew what Sydney meant. He seemed to resent Burke's solicitude over his acquaintance with Leontine and was evidently warning us off. Kennedy, however, avoided the subject.

"I may as well tell you," he resumed, "that I was quite as much influenced by a rumor that arms were somehow getting into Mexican ports as I was by your appeal, Burke, in coming down here. So far I've found nothing that proves my case. But, as I said, there is something under the surface which I don't understand. We have all got to stick together, trust no one but ourselves, and, above all, keep our eyes open."

It was all that was said, but I was relieved to note that Sydney seemed greatly impressed. Still, half an hour later, I saw him sitting in a steamer chair besides Leontine again, watching the beautiful play of the moonlight on the now almost tropical ocean after we had emerged from the gulf stream.

Seeking Kennedy, I found him at last in the smoking room, to my surprise talking with Erickson. I joined them, wondering how I was to convey to Craig what I had just seen without exciting suspicion. They were discussing the commercial and agricultural future of the islands under the America flag, especially the sugar industry, which had fallen into a low estate.

"I suppose," remarked Kennedy, casually, "that you are already modernizing your plant and that others are doing the same, getting ready for a revival."

Erickson received the remark stolidly. "No," he replied, slowly. "Some of us may be doing so, but as for me, I shall be quite content to sell if I can get my price."

"The planters are not putting in modern machinery, then?" queried Kennedy, innocently, while there flashed over me what he had discovered about shipments of agricultural implements.

Erickson shook his head. "Some of them may be. But for one that is, I know twenty whose only thought is to sell out and take a profit."

The conversation trailed off on other subjects and I knew that Kennedy had had felt that in any such attempt we might count on Whitson playing a lone hand at all stages of the game.

It was the morning of the last day of the voyage. Most of the passengers gathered on the deck for the first glimpse of the land to which we had been journeying.

Before us lay the beautiful and picturesque harbor and town of Charlotte Amalie, one of the finest harbors in the West Indies, deep enough to float the largest vessels, with shipyards, drydocks and repair shops. From the deck it was a strikingly beautiful picture, formed by three spurs of mountains covered with the greenest of tropical foliage. From the edge of the dancing blue waves the town itself rose on the hills, presenting an entrancing panorama.

There was much to watch, but I let nothing interfere with my observation of how the affair between Sydney and Leontine was progressing. To my surprise, I saw that this morning she was bestowing the favor of her smile rather on Burleigh.

Erickson was standing beside Sydney, while we were not far away. Evidently he had been saving up a speech for the occasion and was now prepared to deliver it.

"Mr. Sydney," he began with a wave of his arm that seemed to include us all, "it is a pleasure to welcome you here to our island. Last night it occurred to me that we ought to do something to show that we appreciate it. You must come to dinner tonight at my villa here in town. You are all invited—all of us who have become so enjoyably acquainted on this voyage, which I shall never forget. Believe me when I say that it will be even more a tribute to you personally than because of the official position you are to hold among us."

It was a graceful invitation, more so than I had believed Erickson capable of framing. Sydney could do nothing less than accept and thank him cordially, as we all did.

While we were thanking Erickson I saw that Whitson had taken the occasion also to thank Mrs. Erickson, with whom he had been talking, just a bit apart from the group. He made no secret of his attention, though I thought she was a bit embarrassed by them at such a time. When she started to rejoin the group I noted that she had forgotten her handbag, which lay near where she was sitting.

I picked it up to restore it. Some uncontrollable curiosity prompted me, as all were still looking at the town, to open the bag. Inside was a little bottle of grayish liquid. Hastily I pulled off the cap of my fountain pen and poured into it some of the liquid. Whether either she or any one else had observed me I was not going to run any chances of being seen. I called a passing steward. "Mrs. Erickson forgot her bag," I said; you'll find her over there with Mr. Whitson. She betrayed no anxiety as she received it.

I lost no time in getting to Kennedy and telling him what I had found, and a few moments later he made an excuse to go to our stateroom, as eager as I to know what was in the bottle.

First he poured a drop of the liquid from the cap of my fountain pen in some water. It did not dissolve. Successively he tried alcohol, ether, then pepsin. None had any effect on it. Finally he dissolved it in ammonia.

"Relatively high amount of sulphur," he muttered, after a few moments more of study. "Keratin, I believe."

"Poison?" I asked.

Craig shook his head. "No, harmless." "Then what is it for?"

He may have had some half-formed idea, but all he did was to place the same in his traveling laboratory, close and lock it, and we were ready to be taken ashore. Nearly every one had gone ashore by the time we returned to the deck. Whitson was there yet, talking to the captain, for the shipping at the port interested him.

Kennedy seemed eager now to get ashore, and we went, accompanied by Whitson, and after some difficulty established ourselves at an hotel.

Burke was waiting for us, and in spite of his playing the role of traveling salesman managed to direct us about so that we might as quickly as possible pick up the thread of the mysterious death of Dwight. It did not take us long to gather such meager information as there was about the autopsy that had followed the strange death of Sydney's predecessor.

No trace of anything out of the way had been found, and there the matter had rested, except for suspicion. One of our first visits was to the American consulate, where Sydney, by virtue of his special commission, had established himself. There seemed to be no clue to the mysterious death of Dwight. All that we were able to discover, after some hours of patient inquiry, was that Dwight had suffered from great prostration, marked cyanosis, convulsions and coma. Whether the result of some strange disease or a poison no one was prepared to say. All that was known was that the blow, if blow it had been, was swift, sudden, sure.

We ran across Whitson once or twice during the day, busily engaged renewing acquaintances with merchants and planters he had known before, but I do not recall having seen either Burleigh or Leontine, which I thought rather strange, for the town was small and strangers few.

Erickson had invited us to come late in the afternoon to the dinner and we did not delay in getting there. His house proved to be a veritable palace, on the side of one of the hills rising abruptly from the shore. The Ericksons were proud of their home, as well they might be, in spite of the complaints we had heard Nanette utter and the efforts of Erickson to sell his holdings. Mrs. Erickson proved to be a charming hostess, and the host extended a hospitality such as one but rarely meets.

Burleigh arrived proudly with Leontine, followed closely by Sydney. Whitson came. Burke and ourselves completed the party. Kennedy and I were passing along a colonnade that opened from the large dining hall, when Craig paused and looked at the massive table set for the dinner.

A servant had just completed setting out cocktails at the various places, pouring them from a huge tankard which had been on a sideboard. Guests had been walking past through the colonnade since we arrived, but at the moment there was no one about and even the servant had disappeared.

Kennedy stepped lightly into the dining hall and looked about sharply. He pulled from his pocket a clean linen handkerchief. Into an empty glass he poured the contents of one of the cocktail glasses, straining the liquid through the handkerchief. Then he poured the filtrate, if I may call it such, back into the original glass. A second he treated in the same way and a third. He had nearly completed the round of the table when I heard a light step. My warning came only just in time. It was Burleigh. He saw us, made some hasty remark and walked on. Had it been interest in Leontine or in the dining room that had drawn him thither?

Kennedy was now looking closely at the handkerchief, and I looked also. In the glasses had been innumerable little seeds. The fine meshes of the linen had extracted them. What were they? I took one in my fingers and crushed it. There was an unmistakable odor of bitter almonds. What did it mean?

How I managed to get through that dinner I do not know. It was a brilliant affair. After the coffee Kennedy managed to make some excuse for us to leave. In the secrecy of our room in the little hotel Craig was soon making use of his traveling laboratory.

"What about the little bottle of keratin?" I asked, eagerly.

"Oh, yes," he replied, not looking up from the tests he was making. "Well, keratin, you know, is also called epidermose. It is a scleroprotein present largely in cuticular structure, such as hair, nails, horn. I believe it is usually prepared from pieces of horn soaked in pepsin, hydrochloric acid and water for a long time. Then the residue is dissolved in ammonia and acetic acid.

"The pepsin of the stomach won't digest it," he returned. "For that reason it is used for coating what are known as enteric capsules. Anything coated with keratin is carried on through the stomach into the intestines."

"What are the seeds? Have you found out yet?"

"There seem to be two kinds. Some of them are quite harmless. But there are others that have been soaked in nitro-benzol—artificial oil of bitter almonds. Even a few drops, such as might be soaked up in this way, might be fatal. They were all carefully coated with keratin. Really, they are keratin-coated enteric capsules of nitro-benzol—a deadly poison."

I looked at him, aghast at what some of us had been rescued from by his prompt action.

"You see," he went on, "that is why the autopsies probably showed nothing. These doctors down here sought for a poison in the stomach, but if the poison had been in the stomach the odor alone would have betrayed it. You smelt it when you crushed a seed. But the poisoning had been devised to avoid just that chance of discovery. There was no poison in the stomach. Death was delayed long enough, also, to divert suspicion from the real poisoner. Some one has been diabolically clever in covering up the crimes."

I could only gasp my amazement. "Then," I blurted out, "you think the Ericksons——"

Our door burst open. It was Burke.

"Look!" he exclaimed, pointing to the open window. For a moment I gazed at the sight blankly. Then I realized that sweeping on us was one of those sudden, deadly West Indian hurricanes. We hurried out on the street. The Ericksons had just driven up with Burleigh and Leontine, as well as Whitson and Sydney.

On the horizon an ugly, dark cloud rose menacingly. In the strange, unearthly murkiness I could see people pouring out into the narrow streets.

Leontine had hurried into the hotel. Suddenly, without further warning, the storm broke. Trees were turned up by the roots and buildings rocked as if they were houses of cards.

"Leontine," I heard a voice mutter by my side. It was Burleigh.

I was literally picked up and hurled against an object in the darkness—a man. "In the room—more keratin—more seeds!" It was Kennedy. He had made a search in the confusion, which otherwise would have been more difficult.

Just then came a crash as the hotel crumpled under the fierce stress of the storm. Out of the doorway struggled a figure just in time to clear the falling walls. It was Burleigh, a huge gash from a beam on his forehead. In his arms clinging about his neck, was Leontine, no longer the sophisticated, but in the face of this primeval danger just a woman.

"My God!" exclaimed a thick voice, as an arm pointed toward the harbor.

There was the Arroyo, tugging at every extra mooring that could be impressed into service. The lighters had broken or been cut away, and were scudding squarely at the shore below us. A moment and they had crashed on the beach, while the great waves tore open and flung about heavy cases as though they were mere toys.

Then, almost as suddenly as it had come the storm began to abate, the air cleared, and nothing remained but the fury of the waves.

"Look!" exclaimed Kennedy, pointing down at the strange wreckage that strewed the beach. "Does that look like agricultural machinery?"

We strained our eyes. Kennedy did not pause:

"The moment I heard that arms were getting through into Mexico I suspected that somewhere here in the Caribbean munitions were being transshipped. Perhaps they have been sent to Atlantic ports ostensibly for the allies. They have got down here disguised. From this port, the key to the vast sweep of mainland, I reasoned that those were taken over to secret points on the coast, where big ships could not safely go. It was here that blockade runners were refitted in our civil war. It is here that this new gun-running plot has been laid.

"The only obstacle between the transfer of the arms and success was the activity of an American consulate. Those lighters were not to carry goods to other islands; they were really destined for Mexico. It was profitable. And the scheme for removing opposition was evidently safe."

Kennedy was holding up another bottle of keratin and some fruit seeds. "I found these in a room in the hotel," he added.

I did not comprehend. "But," I cut in, "the handbag, the dinner—what of them?"

"A plant—a despicable trespass on hospitality; all part of a scheme to throw guilt on some one else, worthy of a renegade and traitor!"

Craig wheeled suddenly, then added: "I suppose you know that there is reputed to have been on one of these hills the headquarters of the old pirate, Teach—'the mildest manner'd man that ever scuttled a ship or cut a throat!'"

Kennedy paused, then added quickly: "In respect to covering up your gun-running, Whitson, you are superior even to Teach!"

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Ukraine Republic as a Check to Bolshevik Plans

BY CHARLES M. PEPPER.

UKRAINE demands a place in the Russian revolutionary republics. The word has a great deal of meaning for Germany and the bolsheviki. It may mean disaster to the plans of both.

The proposed Ukraine republic is something more than a logical sequel of the anarchy with which the bolsheviki started out as a part of their program. It has a substantial basis. There is geographical extension back of it. It also has substantial racial identity and identity of language. What is more important is that in the way of products and resources it has the means of sustaining the population comprised within its borders and a surplus to spare.

The Ukraine, in some of the dispatches, takes on a larger geographical extent than is comprised within the limits of the region, but the additions come within its sphere of influence, so that the whole section in the present political situation of Russia may be considered as one. At least, the region is one which is refusing to recognize the rule of the bolsheviki.

* * *

It stretches from Rumania and the mouths of the Danube on the west to Astrakhan on the Caspian and the mouths of the Volga on the east. Its southern border is the Black sea. Its northern limits are not definitely fixed, because the bolsheviki are not sure any morning how much territory of southern Russia will be in their possession when the sun goes down that night.

The Ukraine and its territorial neighbors include the great agricultural producing region of Russia, the valleys of the Dnieper, the Don and the Volga. The Ukraine does not claim political control over the country of the Cossacks, but apparently there is an understanding between the Cossacks of the Don and the Ukraine government. The Ukraine leaders thus far have been deaf to the appeal of the bolsheviki at Petrograd to unite against "the common enemy"—that is, the Cossacks of the Don. They have refused to let the bolshevik troops cross their territory to reach the Cossacks.

The agricultural resources of the Ukraine region and the adjoining territory comprise wheat, corn, rye, barley, beet sugar and minor farm products. They also comprise dairy products and wool. The middle Volga basin produces 75 per cent and upward of the winter wheat of Russia, and much of this district has shown a readiness to co-operate with the Ukraine in defying the bolsheviki government at Petrograd. In the region of the Dnieper and the Don more than 156,000,000 bushels of rye a year are produced under normal conditions. Corn and barley also are staple crops.

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In peace times the Russian system of transportation never has been quite adequate for the distribution of the agricultural crops of the Volga and southern Russia, but a sufficient proportion of them has been shipped to the north to afford some relief to the populous sections there, including Moscow and Petrograd. Since the opening of the war, even when the Russian military system was at its best, the difficulty of food transportation has been an acute one.

When the invasion of the German and Austrian troops into Poland and beyond drove millions of the wretched inhabitants farther back into the interior they were able to obtain some subsistence from the productive regions of the south, because they were getting nearer to those districts. It is presumed that they have pressed farther southward and are now finding a means of subsistence through the cultivation of the lands which have been free from the threat of military invasion. It is known that some crops have approached something like normal production.

If anarchy were not reigning at Petrograd and if the Ukraine and its neighbors were willing to co-operate with the bolsheviki some food supplies might be sent north. But with civil war actually raging there is no prospect of the bolsheviki getting food from Russia's most productive region, and consequently they have to face increasing discontent among their own followers. That is a powerful argument for a conciliatory course on their part in their dealings with the Ukraine.

In peaceful times the bulk of the agricultural exports of Russia have gone out through this southern region, by way of the Black sea and the Straits of Dardanelles, to the Mediterranean. Wheat has been the principal cargo. It was taken by Italy, Spain, Holland and some of it by the United Kingdom.

The failure of the British expedition to force the passage of the Dardanelles and the continued control of the straits by Turkey has shut off these supplies from the allies and from the neutral countries of Europe. That situation is not likely to be changed, but there is no prospect that Germany will get the benefit of it. The bolsheviki may betray Russia to her, or such part of Russia as they control, but they cannot betray the Ukraines and the Cossacks. Germany would have to have a big army invading southern Russia in order to control the crops, and if they did control the country it is pretty certain that the crops which would be harvested would not be large enough to sustain the invading troops themselves, let alone any surplus for the civilian population of Germany.

Many of the industrial resources of Russia are also in this southern region. The bulk of the coal produced comes from the Donetz basin. The iron ore resources are principally in the southern districts. It is there that the iron and steel industries are situated. But their control under war conditions would be of no such advantage to Germany as has been the control of the Belgian coal fields and the iron ore fields of northern France.

This is the economic situation as to the bolsheviki and Germany. The political situation is worse for both of them. The Ukraine, even under the autocracy of the czar, always notoriously inherited a strong sense of political independence. The assertions of this feeling usually were pronounced enough to secure consideration from the czar's government, because, while the secret police might partially cope with nihilist plots at Petrograd, or St. Petersburg, they could not dominate a district such as that comprised in the Ukraine.

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Local self-government had a definite existence in these provinces. There was also the sentiment of nationality in some degree different from the sentiment of Russia. This was partly because of the geographical situation and of the homogeneity of the people and the identity of their interests. Even in the first days of the revolutionary government which overthrew the dark forces of autocracy and which promised genuine and liberal institutions, there were reports that the Ukraine, while welcoming the change, was of the opinion that they could be made more effective by establishing a Ukraine republic, possibly without any connection with the central government at Petrograd.

The Ukraines did not go quite that far, but they had established a fairly satisfactory government of their own when the bolsheviki came into power. Their rada, or local parliament, is in the full exercise of legislative powers at Kief, which is the center of the government activities. They sent a delegation to Petrograd to explain, not their wishes, but their intentions. The bolsheviki, on their part, sent commissioners to the rada to urge submission to their own authority. They sent troops with the commissioners. The Ukraine leaders sent troops to welcome them.

The result was civil war. The Ukrainers, fighting on their own ground, generally, had the best of it. There were also riots and pillaging. Members of the Ukraine delegation in Petrograd were arrested by the bolsheviki and held virtually as hostages. This did not deter the Ukraine leaders from their course. They continued to maintain their position of quasi-independence.

The rada, or parliament, in session at Kief, treated the ultimatum of the bolsheviki demanding submission with scant politeness. It pronounced in favor of a federal socialistic republic, which alone could be competent to decide the question of peace for the whole of Russia. The inference from this pronouncement was that if such a republic really were to be established the Ukraine might be content with a large measure of autonomy and not set up for itself, as an independent nation or state. But it made clear that the Ukraines did not recognize the bolshevik groups in their negotiations with the kaiser as representing Russia.

The Ukraine government also wanted the bolshevik government, as an evidence of sovereignty and good faith, to issue money to meet its needs if it were to be considered a part of that government, but the bolsheviki were not ready to issue money to any except their own partisans. The shutting off of foodstuffs by the Ukraine government was a blunt hint that without money for the Ukraine there would be no food for northern Russia.

It does not appear from the meager accounts of the fighting in southern Russia that the bolsheviki are making any headway, although occasionally they may achieve a minor military success. Since all the news comes through Petrograd and is censored by the bolsheviki, it may safely be assumed that if any important advantages were gained these would be heralded. The last reports allowed to filter out indicated that the Ukraine forces were in control of Bessarabia and along the Rumanian frontier. If this be true it is a further block to the German plans.

It is clear that up to the present time the bolsheviki have not succeeded in getting the Ukrainans into a struggle with the Cossacks. Instead, the two anti-bolshevik forces seem to be co-operating, and Cossack troops are reported in control of the railways of the southeast over which is transported the coal from the Donetz basin.

The control of Odessa is a vital factor in the situation. Odessa is the most important port in southern Russia, or in all Russia, for that matter. Its population is more than half a million. In the past, virtually all the agricultural products of the region have been transported through it. Shipping lines to all parts of the world have their headquarters there.

The city is also an industrial as well as a commercial center. It has a large artisan population. Apparently, the bolsheviki counted on this class to support them as the workmen's delegation in Petrograd and Moscow had done. Whether there was any direct connection between the labor unions and Odessa and in Petrograd is not known, but the people of Odessa as a rule had little sympathy with the people of Petrograd.

Conflicting reports have been received from time to time as to what it going on in Odessa, but it is evident that there has been rioting, and probably civil war. The bombing of the American consulate, which was reported, may have been an incident to the rioting, or it may have been a deliberate attempts inspired by the bolshevik adherents.

Americans always have been popular in Odessa. The commercial interests represented there have been considerable. The American consulate is one of the most important in Russia. The consular district covers a large region, all that is embraced in the Ukraine districts, that of the Don Cossacks, and even beyond to Astrachan.

Odessa is the headquarters of the

PALACE OF JUSTICE AND PANTALEIMON CHURCH AT ODESSA.

Russian Black Sea fleet. In the early days of the war this fleet was a very effective arm of the allies. It would have been more effective had the Gallipoli expedition not failed to force the passage of the Dardanelles. Nevertheless, it inflicted considerable damage on Turkish ships and drove them to cover.

* * *

When the Russian military expedition, under the czar's cousin, the grand duke, was making its brilliant advance into Armenia and was enveloping Trebizond and other ports on the southern shore of the Black sea, the fleet was said to be co-operating. Then the treachery in high quarters caused the military activities in Armenia to be ended, and it was supposed that the fleet, under orders, was compelled to bottle itself up at Odessa.

There have been intimations that the Black sea fleet was controlled by the same influences that caused the warships at Kronstadt to mutiny, and that a secret understanding existed throughout the entire Russian navy. But it is not certain that this is true. While the Kronstadt crews had their brief day of power, and while they have supported the bolsheviki, there have been reports that the Black sea fleet is of a different mind. Its commanders would more likely be in sympathy with the rada, but its real attitude would depend on the crews. Since they are recruited principally from southern Russia they also more likely will be in sympathy with the local conditions than with the bolsheviki at Petrograd.

In any circumstances, Odessa and the Black sea fleet will have a determining influence on the future of the Ukraine. The population of the seaport and the fleet itself could make the Ukraine's defiance of the bolsheviki formidable. Lack of sympathy would increase the difficulties of establishing an independent Ukraine government, but also would contribute rather to anarchy than to establishing the authority of the bolsheviki. In whatever light viewed, it is evident that the developments in the Ukraine and the developments in the rada, or parliament, at Kief, are going to have a very important bearing on the future of Russia. It must be remembered that the frontiers of the Ukraine extend to those of the central powers. That is a painful Ukraine argument against letting the bolsheviki deliver the region over to a German peace.

Sugar From Java.

SUGAR, so much in the public eye and so much upon the public tongue, in a figurative sense, has caused the thoughts of many persons to turn to Cuba, the great sugar island of the world, but relatively little public interest has been manifested in another great sugar island—that is Java. Persons who have not traveled there and have not been particularly interested in the geography of the east or of the Malay Archipelago are apt to think of Java as a small island where some coffee comes from sometimes and a vast quantity of tropic spices. Java seems small to them because it is so far away. That island is peopled by 30,000,000 inhabitants. From west to east it is 622 miles long and its extreme width is 121 miles, while in one place a line fifty-five miles long will reach across the island. There are more than 48,000 square miles of land in Java, while if several of the closely associated and adjacent islands be counted the Javan area exceeds 50,000 square miles.

Java is such a fruitful land that one hesitates to specify the principal crop, but it is one of the great sugar-producing countries of the world. The annual export of sugar amounts to something like 1,700,000 tons. People are so accustomed to thinking of sugar in terms of pounds that nearly 2,000,000 tons of sugar seems to have a stupefying effect on the mind. There are more than 400,000 acres of land under cultivation in sugar on the Island of Java and the average yield per acre is four and one-half tons, which is a yield that is high above the average of sugar land.

The cultivation of sugar cane is an old industry in Java. The production has increased rapidly and the end is not yet. Between 1850 and 1860 Java produced less than 100,000 tons a year. Sugar tonnage increased rapidly and steadily, until 1904 the million-ton output was reached, and it is thought that the two-million-ton mark will be passed within two or three years. A writer in the Americas, issued by the National City Bank of New York, says that while the cultivation of sugar is a very old industry in Java, it has passed through many vicissitudes. Fifty years ago, he says, the sugar was raised almost entirely by native farmers, who paid a part of their crop to the government as rent. The rise of beet sugar growing in Europe made it necessary in order to compete to introduce a more efficient system. Today the cultivation is done by the manufacturers themselves. They lease the land from the natives, who in many cases are the owners, or from the native communities. Many small properties are thus united under the management of a manufacturer during the period of one planting—that is, about three years. After each planting the land is turned back to the native proprietors for growing rice or corn until its fertility for sugar production is restored.

Not the Same.

CRITIC Butler Glaenzer took down a presumptuous playwright the other evening at the Players' Club, in Gramercy Park.

"I've written a play on the 'social evil,'" the man said, pompously; "something on the order of Ibsen's 'Ghosts,' you know. Yes, Ibby and I are pulling in the same boat now."

"But not," smiled Mr. Glaenzer, "with the same sculls."